

Lifeless

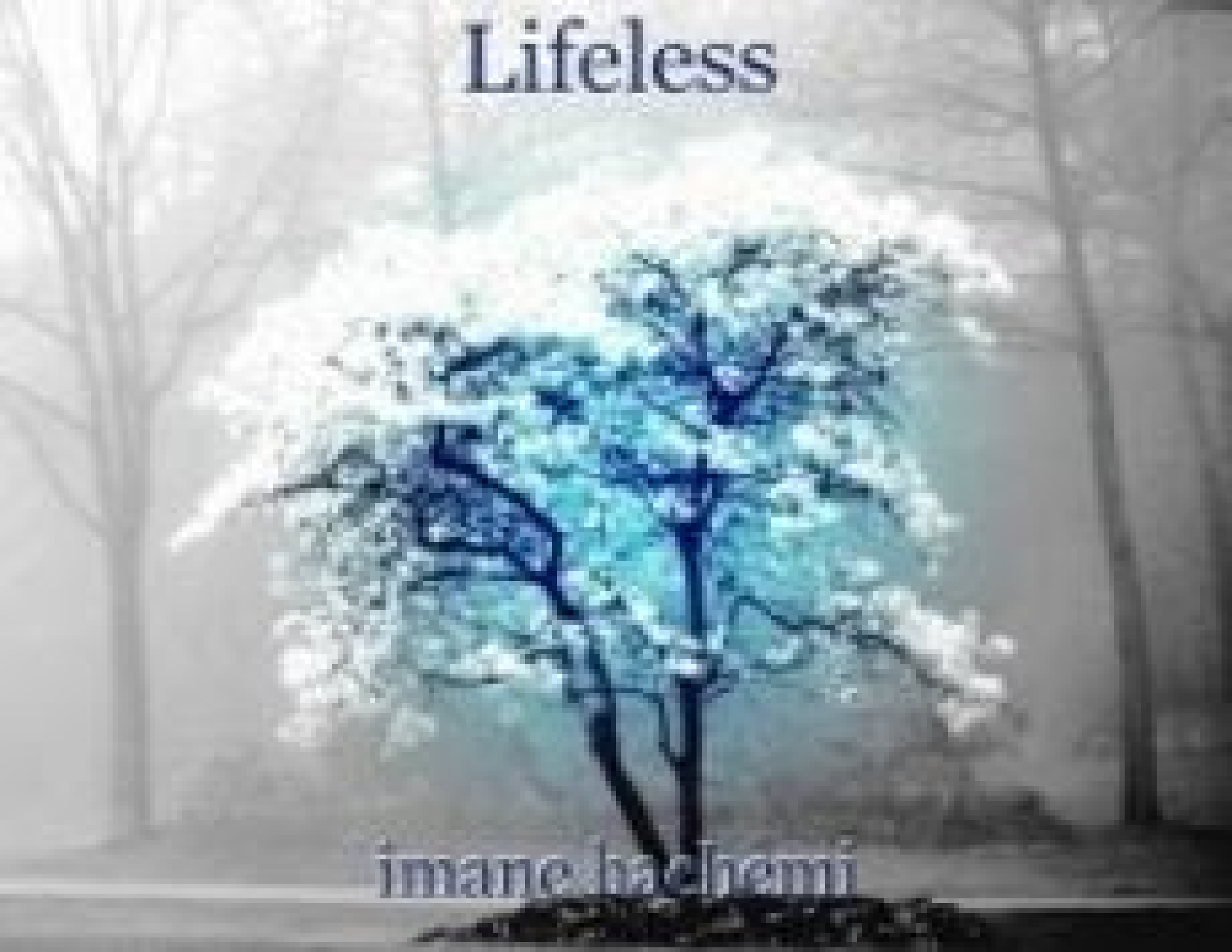


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When I was four, my parents died in an accident, then a nice couple took me in. The man was a doctor and he was married to a lovely woman and they had no children. They were very good to me, however, they were very strangely calm and kind of emotionless. We lived in a nice Japanese style house with a lovely yard. The cherry tree was heartwarming in the springs. I felt at home after and had no reason to complain. However, after a few years, I started feeling something was odd, but, we were still living happily as a family. After some time I started noticing a man dressed oddly, who used to stand in front of our house, starrng for hours. He repeatedly come. He seemed to have some kind of interest in our house and clearly, he looked like he was trying his best not to be noticed. He also seemed to have no interest in me.

After a few weeks, some strange people came and took me from my home. I found myself in a huge building that seemed like an ancient cathedral. An officer approached me and said that the man whom I used to see was a detective, who went missing since a few days. The detective reached a conclusion that my current parents were dead but not dead, alive but not quite much. At least that is what he stated before going missing. Since I have been in that household for many years, I would want to understand what that meant, therefore he told me that I could have access to the detective's office and carry on with his work to perceive what he possibly meant. I wanted to know, I was curious, after all, I also was feeling that something was off. Without wasting any time, I started checking all the documents and reading the books that seemed to have already been carefully collected on his desk. Later that week I found something. I run to the officer and told him my theory. There is a microorganism that consumes human corpses known *in the old Hojin as Seidrain* , which means to devour. This organism grows a type of

saprophyte. If a living creature eats it, it starts consuming their vitality from within. In the end, it leaves nothing but an empty moving shell, which you cannot categorize as a living being. Therefore, they are alive, but, they are also dead. The officer was surprised to hear my conclusion, however, he seemed satisfied with it.

The next day I was moved from my room to a different place. When I arrived, the place was full of children and young people, the officer was standing beside me. I looked at him, without even speaking the question that was turning in my head. He looked at me and spoke

'Those are children who lived with similar parents as yours'.

Those people were not bad, however; they took in children who lost their families to raise. After all, their spiritless shells needed those children.

'Have you heard of kenophobia' he asked me.

'It is the fear of the void. Their shells have developed something similar you can say, that is why they take children to overcome their need. But that is still okay', he said and continued :

'However, here is where the harm comes, those bodies become a nest infected with Seidrain, when it has consumed all of their vitality, it doesn't stop there but it starts looking for nearby vessels that have been in much interaction with, to move into. That is why it is safer to remove all the children from their approach'.

The officer must have taken a liking to me, he showed a more cold attitude to the rest of children I told myself. The next morning while we all were having our breakfast he came and made an announcement:

'From today on you will all be living here until we find you new homes or such, he said. You can move in freely in the right wing and do any kind of

activity that you prefer, but you must know that you are not allowed in the left wing or the library'.

That triggered my curiosity. I remember the mystical books that I read on the detective's desk. The library, which is in the left wing, must be full of such books and scripts from old ages. That must be a mystical library. I still had access to the detective office, which was in the left wing as well, I decided then to sneak in from there into the library and have a look at what might be hidden there.